

June 6, 2001

Ms. Kimberly Topper
Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (HFD-21)
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Ms. Kimberly Topper

Thank you so much for your work with the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research Advisory Committee, with the Food and Drug Administration.

As a former Lobbyist and Pharmaceutical Sales Rep., now suffering from a spinal condition which is inoperable and incurable, this issue is obviously of great interest and concern to me.

Before finding Oxycontin, pain management really did not exist for me. The other pain medications I tried, and I think I pretty much tried them all, did not work for me. They were not very effective in treating the pain, were extremely depressing, and had many other negative side effects. I was in constant pain, and even the smallest task had become physically impossible. In fact my Mother has basically lived with our family for the past few years to fill the role of "Mother" for my children.

Oxycontin has basically put quality and hope back into my life. I can get out of bed in the mornings. I can fix small dinners. I can take short walks. I can ride in a car. I can breathe without pain shooting into my back and down my legs. I can enjoy being with my family and friends, and relish the beauty of my garden. Most important, I feel like I am able to be a real Mom to my kids again, and I am not severely depressed. For the first time in three years my life has not revolved around pain.

Without Oxycontin, for me, none of these things would be possible.

The sad thing is, it seems like every time I turn on the news I hear how horrible Oxycontin is because people are getting it illegally, and mutilating this medication in order to get the effect they desire. Oxycontin is a time-released medication, which is one reason it is so effective. Most pain medications are taken once every four hours. The first hour, with the other pain medications, I would get some relief. But the next three hours would be truly dreadful.

I find it very disturbing that people who are getting this medication illegally, then changing it to get "high," are giving this medication such a bad rap that those of us who literally cannot live quality lives without Oxycontin, may not be able to get this medication at all. A triplicate form is now required for this medication, as it should be. This medication is for people with incurable diseases suffering indescribably severe pain.

Please do not let thieves and drug abusers railroad Oxycontin off the market, or basically effectively take it off the market by making Doctors afraid to prescribe it, and Pharmacists afraid to carry it. Through misinformations given inadvertently by the press, public opinion of Oxycontin I'm sure is very low. Somehow, the press is failing to give equal time to those of us who cannot live a semi-normal life without this miraculous medication.

It is said that Oxycontin is prescribed more than Viagra. This shows how many people are suffering from excruciating and incurable pain. There are so many people with cancer, brain tumors, nerve damage, amputation pains, etc., and these people should also have a right to live as normally as possible and have their voices heard.

So far, from the press, I am almost exclusively hearing the negativity of Oxycontin -- from those who get it illegally, and then mutilate this medication to get the effect they desire.

Where are the advocates for those of us whose lives have been given back to us by using Oxycontin? Where are the public rage and outcry for letting public policy be so greatly influenced by drug dealers, drug abusers and other criminals?

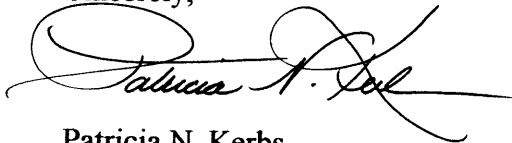
The people in incurable and excruciating pain are NOT being heard. We need to be. As this seems to be the "story de jour," the press needs to be much more responsible in it's reporting.

My understanding is that, by law, ALL patients have a right to have their pain managed. Please do not let Oxycontin be taken off the market, or let it be made virtually impossible for Doctors to prescribe, and Pharmacists to carry. Don't let what normalcy those of us in severe pain have found in our lives, through Oxycontin, be taken from us.

Again, I very much appreciate the type of research you are doing regarding the cost/benefits of medications such as Oxycontin. This is such a relief, as so many of those in power seem to be approaching this with a rather knee-jerk response. They seem not doing the proper research, and are acting on very small bits of selective information in making monumental decisions which will affect the quality of lives for literally millions of Americans.

Thank you again for your time and your caring. Both are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia N. Kerbs", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Patricia N. Kerbs

5 Manteca Ct.

Sacramento, CA 95831

Telephone: 916-392-8700

Fax: 916-392-8767

E-mail: pnkerbs@home.com